



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

CHICAGO ARCHITECTURE BIENNIAL

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CHICAGO ARCHITECTURE BIENNIAL DRAWS MORE THAN HALF A MILLION VISITORS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Based on inaugural success, Biennial set to return in the fall of 2017

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced that 530,551 Chicago residents and visitors from abroad took part in the inaugural Chicago Architecture Biennial (CAB), which closed January 3, 2016. The Biennial was unprecedented—the largest international exhibition of contemporary architecture ever to have taken place in North America—featuring the visionary ideas of 120 participating architecture and design offices from more than 30 countries.

The exhibition was free and open to the general public at the Biennial's hub, the Chicago Cultural Center, and sites across the city and the region. Based on the first edition's success, the Biennial will return to Chicago in the fall of 2017. The official dates, leadership and theme of the next Chicago Architecture Biennial will be announced in the coming months.

"The first-ever Chicago Architecture Biennial was an unequivocal success, exceeding our expectations for attendance and bolstered Chicago's reputation as the vanguard of architectural thinking on the national and international stage," said Mayor Emanuel. "The City of Chicago is synonymous with architectural innovation, from the world's first modern skyscrapers to the forefront of urban design, which is why Chicago was naturally suited to host an architectural event of this scale. I want to thank all of the architects, organizers, and residents of Chicago who participated in this event and made it such a tremendous success for our City."

Estimated attendance at the Chicago Cultural Center since CAB opened was 276,806 (including record-breaking crowds Opening Weekend: October 1–4, 2015). Another 253,745+ attended exhibitions at eight other official Biennial venues—including Millennium Park's Chase Promenade, the BP Prize-winning "Chicago Horizon" Lakefront Kiosk at Museum Campus, the Graham Foundation, Stony Island Arts Bank on the city's South Side and the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed SC Johnson headquarters in Racine, Wisconsin. Many more attended public programs (talks, tours, films and more) presented by 114 partner organizations across the city and the region—including neighborhood parks and libraries, universities and museums.

More than 10,000 students experienced the Chicago Architecture Biennial—and the Biennial partnered with the Chicago Architecture Foundation to create a special program for K-12 students that included bilingual tours, a downloadable guide for children and a teen ambassador program.

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The Biennial was praised by critics as one of the top architecture events of the year—and generated publicity worldwide for Chicago and its architectural legacy.

“The success of the Biennial lies in the extraordinary connections it has produced at different scales—between architects and the public, between cultural institutions and educational initiatives, between Chicago and the world,” said Sarah Herda, Co-Artistic Director of the 2015 Chicago Architecture Biennial. “The enthusiastic reception of the Biennial confirms that there is a far-reaching and overwhelming commitment to architecture and its possible futures.”

The event was supported by the City of Chicago and the Graham Foundation, with additional support from the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, and the Chicago Park District. All funding for the event was privately raised, with significant investments from BP and SC Johnson.

“The Biennial’s overwhelming success is a testament to Chicagoans’ pride in their architecture and in this great city,” said John Mingé, Chairman and President of BP America. “BP and our 4,000 employees who call the Chicago area home have been honored to play a small role in bringing it to life.”

For a complete list of participants, supporters, media partners and program partners, visit: www.chicagoarchitecturebiennial.org.

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The Chicago Architecture Biennial, which took place October 3, 2015, through January 3, 2016, provided a platform for groundbreaking architectural projects and spatial experiments that demonstrate how creativity and innovation can radically transform our lived experience. Through a constellation of exhibitions, full-scale installations, and a program of events, the Biennial invited the public to engage with and think about architecture in new and unexpected ways, and to take part in a global discussion on the future of the field.

The Chicago Architecture Biennial was envisioned by Mayor Rahm Emanuel and is an outgrowth of the comprehensive cultural plan developed by the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) and its commissioner, Michelle Boone. Released in October 2012, the Chicago Cultural Plan provides a framework to guide the city’s cultural and economic growth.

The inaugural Chicago Architecture Biennial was curated by Joseph Grima and Sarah Herda, and took its title, “The State of the Art of Architecture,” from a 1977 conference organized by Chicago architect Stanley Tigerman, which invited leading American designers to Chicago to discuss the current state of the field. The 2015 Chicago Architecture Biennial expanded the spirit and scope of this event. It invited both emerging and established practices from across the world to Chicago to demonstrate how advances in architectural design are tackling the most pressing issues of today.